

Practitioner's Docket No. 604.35-US1

CHAPTER II

Preliminary Classification:

Proposed Class:

Subclass:

**TRANSMITTAL LETTER
TO THE UNITED STATES ELECTED OFFICE (EO/US)**

(ENTRY INTO U.S. NATIONAL PHASE UNDER CHAPTER II)

PCT/US00/07913	24 March 2000 (24.03.01)	None
International Application Number	International Filing Date	International Earliest Priority Date

TITLE OF INVENTION: AGENT MANAGED VIRTUAL PROSPECTING

APPLICANT(S): MINDARROW SYSTEMS, INC.; MCEWAN, Richard; and WOLFINGTON, Scott

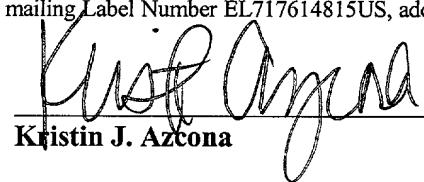
Box PCT
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington D.C. 20231

CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. SECTION 1.10*

(Express Mail label number is mandatory.)

(Express Mail certification is optional.)

I hereby certify that this paper, along with any document referred to, is being deposited with the United States Postal Service on this date May 21, 2001, in an envelope as "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee," mailing Label Number EL717614815US, addressed to the: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231.



Kristin J. Azcona

WARNING: *Certificate of mailing (first class) or facsimile transmission procedures of 37 C.F.R. Section 1.8 cannot be used to obtain a date of mailing or transmission for this correspondence.*

***WARNING:** *Each paper or fee filed by "Express Mail" must have the number of the "Express Mail" mailing label placed thereon prior to mailing. 37 C.F.R. Section 1.10(b). Since the filing of correspondence under [Section] 1.10 without the Express Mail mailing label thereon is an oversight that can be avoided by the exercise of reasonable care, requests for waiver of this requirement will not be granted on petition." Notice of Oct. 24, 1996, 60 Fed. Reg. 56,439, at 56,442.*

ATTENTION: EO/US

1. Applicant herewith submits to the United States Elected Office (EO/US) the following items under 35 U.S.C. Section 371:

- a. This express request to immediately begin national examination procedures (35 U.S.C. Section 371(f)).
- b. The U.S. National Fee (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(1)) and other fees (37 C.F.R. Section 1.492) as indicated below:

2. Fees

CLAIMS FEE*	(1) FOR	(2) NUMBER FILED	(3) NUMBER EXTRA	(4) RATE	(5) CALCULATIONS
	TOTAL CLAIMS	19 -20 =	0	x \$18.00 =	\$0.00
	INDEPENDENT CLAIMS	1 - 3 =	0	x \$80.00 =	\$0.00
	MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIM(S) (if applicable) + \$270.00				
BASIC FEE	U.S. PTO WAS INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION AUTHORITY Where an International preliminary examination fee as set forth in Section 1.482 has been paid on the international application to the U.S. PTO: and the international preliminary examination report states that the criteria of novelty, inventive step (non-obviousness) and industrial activity, as defined in PCT Article 33(2) to (4) have been satisfied for all the claims presented in the application entering the national stage (37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(a)(4)) \$100.00				
	Total of above Calculations				
SMALL ENTITY	Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Affidavit must be filed. (note 37 CFR Sections 1.9, 1.27, 1.28)				
	Subtotal				
	Total National Fee				
	Fee for recording the enclosed assignment document \$40.00 (37 C.F.R. Section 1.21(h)). See attached "ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET".				
TOTAL	Total Fees enclosed				

*See attached Preliminary Amendment Reducing the Number of Claims.

09/856387

JC18 Rec'd PCT/PTO 22 MAY 200

A check in the amount of \$90.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed.

3. A copy of the International application as filed (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(2)) is not required, as the application was filed with the United States Receiving Office.
4. A translation of the International application into the English language (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(2)) is not required as the application was filed in English.
5. Amendments to the claims of the International application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(3)) are transmitted herewith.
6. A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (38 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(3)) is not required as the amendments were made in the English language.
7. A copy of the international examination report (PCT/IPEA/409) is not required as the application was filed with the United States Receiving Office.
8. Annex(es) to the international preliminary examination report is/are not required as the application was filed with the United States Receiving Office.
9. A translation of the annexes to the international preliminary examination report is not required as the annexes are in the English language.
10. An oath or declaration of the inventor (35 U.S.C. Section 371(c)(4)) complying with 35 U.S.C. Section 115 is submitted herewith, and such oath or declaration is attached to the application.

II. Other document(s) or information included:

11. An International Search Report (PCT/ISA/210) or Declaration under PCT Article 17(2)(a) is not required, as the application was searched by the United States International Searching Authority.
12. An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 C.F.R. Sections 1.97 and 1.98 will be transmitted within THREE MONTHS of the date of submission of requirements under 35 U.S.C. Section 371(c).
13. An assignment document is transmitted herewith for recording.
14. Additional documents:
 - a. Copy of request (PCT/RO/101)
15. The above items are being transmitted before 30 months from any claimed priority date.

09/856387

JCT13 Rec'd DRAFTS 22 MAY 2001

AUTHORIZATION TO CHARGE ADDITIONAL FEES

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the following additional fees that may be required by this paper and during the entire pendency of this application to Account No.: 500341

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(a)(1), (2), (3), and (4) (filing fees)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(b), (c), and (d) (presentation of extra claims)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.17 (application processing fees)

37 C.F.R. Section 1.17(a)(1)-(5) (extension fees pursuant to Section 1.136(a))

37 C.F.R. Section 1.492(e) and (f) (surcharge fees for filing the declaration and/or filing an English translation of an International Application later than 20 months after the priority date).

Date: May 21, 2001



Robert D. Fish
Fish & Associates, LLP
1440 N. Harbor Blvd.
Suite 706
Fullerton, CA 92835
USA

AGENT MANAGED VIRTUAL PROSPECTING**Field of the Invention**

The field of the invention is electronic direct marketing.

Background

5 Electronic media has been used to broadcast advertising messages at least since the popularization of advertising message radio. Broadcast advertising is certainly capable of reaching huge audiences, but is difficult to customize for targeting of small groups, let alone individuals. Telephone advertising can be tailored to individual prospects by using a live sales agent, but telephone is not especially conducive to cost-effectively reaching large
10 numbers of prospects.

Popularization of the rich media World Wide Web made it feasible to reach large numbers of prospects, to customize the messages, and to handle feedback from individual prospects, all in a cost effective manner. This development gave rise to the term, "virtual prospecting", which is employed herein to mean the use of electronic media to deliver
15 advertising messages directly to individual prospects. In the very recent past virtual prospecting was combined with electronic advertising messages (e-advertising messages) to provide both highly targeted messages and sophisticated tracking of prospect responses (see PCT/US99/23816, filed 12 Oct. 1999).

Virtual prospecting has been phenomenally successful, with numerous advertisers
20 taking advantage of the tracking function to resolve prospect concerns and thereby turn prospects into customers. One aspect that was not previously appreciated, however, is that the ease and independence with which sales agents can distribute e-advertising messages has management consequences. For example, where distribution of e-advertising messages is charged to an advertiser on a per transmission basis, over-zealous agents can incur significant
25 charges that are not justified by increased sales. There are also management issues with respect to sales agents working from the same or overlapping lists, and sales agents making undesirable choices in matching specific messages with specific targets.

Thus, there is an ongoing need to provide management control over virtual prospecting.

Summary of the Invention

Methods and systems of virtual prospecting are provided in which a marketing agent and a manager work together on an advertising campaign, the marketing agent selects prospects and advertising messages, and send the messages to the prospects, and the manager exercises at least some control over at least one of: (a) the set of prospect information provided to the marketing agent; (b) the set of advertising messages provided to the marketing agent; and (c) an authorized number of sends allocated to the marketing agent.

In various aspects of preferred embodiments the marketing environment includes at least two tiers, and more preferably involves many marketing agents who may be employed by multiple companies. The various marketing agents preferably use their own judgment in selecting prospects and advertising messages from common or at least overlapping databases, with the scope of the selections and/or sends being controlled in at least some manner by the manager.

The advertising messages can be virtually anything, from simple logos or banner ads to sophisticated video advertising messages such as those having interactive recipient interfaces, multiple pages of advertising, or cross-branding.

It is especially contemplated that recipient responses to the advertising will be tracked, and at least some of the tracking information will be provided back to the sending agents to assist the agents in both concluding sales and in improving their targeting skills. Tracking may advantageously include at least one of: (a) a length of time that the recipient viewed the message; (b) a length of time that the recipient viewed a portion of the message; (c) an address to which the recipient forwarded the message; and (c) a piece of information relating to a hyperlink contained in the message and utilized by the recipient.

Various objects, features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments of the invention, along with the accompanying drawings in which like numerals represent like components.

Brief Description of The Drawings

Fig. 1 is a schematic of an embodiment of an agent managed virtual prospecting system.

Fig. 2 is a flow chart of a preferred method of conducting agent managed virtual

5 prospecting.

Detailed Description

In Figure 1 a marketing environment 10 has multiple tiers including a first tier 12, a second tier 14, a third tier 16, and an nth tier 18. The first tier 12 involves only a single person, manager 22. The second, third, and nth tiers each have multiple agents 24, 26, and 28, respectively, that initiate sends (transmissions) of advertisements 35 to prospects 40, using information from a prospects database 50 and an advertising messages database 60. The manager 22 exerts at least some control over the activity of the various agents 24, 26, 28 through a restriction function 70.

In preferred embodiments, restriction function 70 operates on both the extent to which 15 the various agents can access the prospects database 50 and the advertisements database 60, as well as the extent to which the various agents can send out advertisements 35 to recipients 40. For example, in one organization the manager 22 may divide the prospects in the prospects database 50 by agent, allowing only certain agents to access certain subsets of prospects. In the same or another organization the manager 22 may limit some agents to 20 sending out a thousand advertisements 35 per day, while others are limited to only sending out five hundred advertisements 35 per day. Additionally or alternatively, there may similar access and activity limitations on the total downstream structure for specific given agents. there may also be multiple managers, that control different or overlapping downstream structures.

The marketing environment 10 is to be construed very broadly, and includes any environment that operates collectively to run an advertising campaign. The marketing environment 10 may thus comprise an advertiser, a single marketing company, multiple companies, or multiple individuals cooperatively engaged in running the campaign. The

5 marketing environment may also comprise any combination of branch offices, divisions, inside or outside salespeople, independent contractors, distributors, and so forth, all of which may be linked together in any suitable manner. For example, elements of the marketing environment may be rigidly connected to a single mainframe in a local area network, linked by a virtual private network, or linked only in the sense that they can access common data.

10 The various tiers 12, 14, 16, and 18 are optional, and all other suitable working relationships besides the tiers as shown are contemplated. Although the various tiers 12, 14, 16, and 18 are shown as having specific numbers of marketing agents, the specific numbers of tiers and numbers of agents depicted should not be seen as being limiting in any manner.

Despite the contemplated flexibility, however, the inventive subject matter herein

15 contemplates a minimum involvement of two distinct entities, the manager 22 who may initiate sends of advertising, and at least one marketing agent that is managed by the manager. The campaign may or may not have a campaign manager per se, and even where a campaign manager is present, the manager 22 may or may not be the campaign manager. It is preferred that the manager 22 and various marketing agents would all be human beings

20 rather than machines or software, but such is not mandatory. The manager 22 may in fact, advantageously comprise a computer.

The prospects database 50 and the advertising messages databases 60 may independently be entirely proprietary to one or more of the advertisers, the marketing environment 10, individual agents, or may be obtained from an outside source. It is also

25 contemplated that the prospects database 50 may comprise some or all of a co-sponsorship database as described in PCT application serial no. PCT/US99/22952 filed October 12, 1999, which is incorporated herein by reference.

In some instances there may be only a single advertising message listed on the advertising messages database 60, but in most instances there will be a plurality of

30 advertising messages. In any event the marketing agent would usually select which advertising message to send to individual prospects based upon some additional information.

For example, a marketing agent may understand that a given prospect falls within a particular age or income range, or is a particular sex, and the selection of advertising message to send to that prospect may be made on that basis. It is also contemplated that an agent may select more than one advertising message for a given prospect.

5 With current technology the advertising messages on the advertising messages database 60 are very likely to be canned advertising messages that differ from one another by language, content, medium or in some other manner. It is contemplated, however, that the advertising messages can be dynamically customized to the prospect as set forth in PCT application serial no PCT/US99/23781, filed October 12, 1999, which is incorporated herein
10 by reference.

The term "advertising message" is used herein in a very broad sense to mean any message intending to motivate a recipient to take an action favorable to an advertiser. Advertising messages may be logos, slogans, simple textual banner ads, but more preferably include rich-media graphics such as animation, a photograph or other image, or an audio tract. Still more preferred advertising messages include video and branding graphics.
15 Especially preferred advertising messages will be those that communicate a value proposition communicated in 30 seconds or less. Currently the most preferred advertising messages include an audio tract, a video tract, branding graphics, and hyperlinks, all delivered in a single executable file. Advertising messages may also be included in a carrier having multiple pages, where the recipient can navigate between at least two of the multiple pages.
20 These and other embodiments are as described in PCT application serial no. PCT/US99/23824, filed December 13, 1999, and U.S. Provisional application serial no. 60/159049, filed October 12, 1999, respectively, which are incorporated herein by reference. Still other preferred embodiments include "slide-show" advertising messages as described in
25 previously filed application serial no. PCT/US99/23822 corresponding to attorney docket 604.09, which is incorporated herein by reference.

The term "advertisers" is used herein in the broadest possible sense, including any entity trying to impact the thinking or behavior of others. In many instances the desired impact will include motivating the recipient to purchase goods or services. In other instances
30 the desired impact may be to cause the recipient to vote in a given manner in an election, or a

poll. In still other instances the desired impact may be of a very general nature, perhaps increasing societal awareness of alcoholism.

A major advantage of electronic direct marketing is that it lends itself readily cross branding. An advertisement for vacation trips to the Bahamas may include logos for a fast food chain, or swim wear, or even television shows dealing with travel. Not only does a single message provide impression for each of the multiple marketers, but the inclusion of multiple, well-recognized brands may lend credibility to a new brand, or may lend a certain image of modernity to an older brand.

Selection of prospects and advertising messages from the prospects and advertising messages databases 50, 60 by the marketing agents is preferably accomplished using a graphical interface (not shown) that operates on a local area network (LAN) using a common workstation, laptop, or other computer (not shown). The prospects and advertising messages are preferably drawn from databases 50, 60, respectively, which can reside virtually. There may even be multiple prospects and multiple advertising messages databases.

It is especially contemplated that the various selection processes include selecting individual items as well as groups of items. Thus, the step of the marketing agent selecting the recipient may include the marketing agent selecting the recipient as part of a group of recipients. Similarly, the step of the marketing agent selecting a message includes the marketing agent selecting a plurality of messages for co-transmission to the recipient.

Throughout this application it is stated that a marketing agent takes an active role in doing various things. This term "take an active role" is employed intentionally to convey the impression that the marketing agent need not be the only entity involved. For example, if a marketing agent is assisted in selecting prospects from the prospect database 50, the marketing agent is still considered to be taking an active role in the selection. The same holds true for selecting of advertising messages and sending of the messages. Thus, it may well be that a marketing agent will send an advertising message to a prospect directly through an e-mail interface, in which the message may included in the body or header of an e-mail, or in an attachment. However, the marketing agent may alternatively only designate prospects and advertising messages, and the actual transmission of the messages is under the control of the

manager, or a third party electronic mailing house. The marketing agent taking part would still be considered to be taking an active role in the sending operation.

Suitable third party mailers are preferably high volume electronic mailing companies, that send out hundreds of thousands or even millions of messages per month. An exemplary such company is e-Commercial.com, Inc. based in Southern California, USA. The third party may or may not take part in initially producing the advertising messages, and may or may not take part in customizing the advertising messages. The third party would almost certainly charge for its services, most likely on an incremental basis as a function of the number of messages communicated to prospects, the length of the advertising messages, and so on.

Because of the high traffic involved, the third party may advantageously employ outbound trafficking technologies such as those described in PCT application serial no.

PCT/US99/22948; and U.S. Provisional applications serial nos. 60/158926, 60/158925, and 60/158993, all filed October 12, 1999, each of which is incorporated herein by reference.

Communication of the advertising message(s) to the selected prospects preferably takes place electronically via a public access network such as the Internet, but may additionally or alternatively take place by any suitable method. It is, for example, contemplated that such communication may take place, at least for some prospects, by e-mail, facsimile, or even physically carried postal type mail.

At least some of the prospects will actually receive the advertising message(s), and can be referred to as recipients. At least some of the recipients will respond to the advertising message(s) in some manner, such as by using a computer to open an e-mail, sending a return e-mail, or perhaps by clicking through a hyperlink on the advertising message to a web site (not shown). The web site may or may not belong to a corresponding advertiser, and may or may not even be hosted by the advertiser. At the web site the prospect may provide identifying information such as a name or account number, or may simply browse the web site. In any event is contemplated that some tracking information can be obtained from actions of the prospect either by interacting directly with the advertising message or its carrier, or at a web site to which the recipient links.

In a more sophisticated case, a unique identification code may be included in the advertising message or its carrier, and that code can be employed to track click- throughs,

forwarding, opening and playing of the advertising message, and so forth. The advertising message(s) may also be authenticated. The tracking is preferably performed by a tracking system, which may advantageously be hosted by a third party mailing house. Details of preferred embodiments of such tracking, including descriptions of identification codes and

5 securing of advertising messages, are described in PCT application serial no.

PCT/US99/23824, filed December 13, 1999, which is incorporated herein by reference.

A response may occur through some medium other than that used to deliver the advertising message. One simple example is where the advertising message motivates the prospect to physically visit a retail store or other outlet to make a purchase. Regardless of how the prospect responds, at least some tracking information is preferably reported back to the marketing agent. Such information may be valuable in closing a sale, or at the very least in making future selections of prospects and advertising messages. One particularly advantageous method of responding involves the prospect engaging an icon, button, or other trigger that sends a message back to either the originating agent or some other agent. The message may, for example, ask that the agent call the prospect on the telephone, or send additional information. A system that provides such phone response tracking is Instantcall™. As another example, the message may open a chat room type dialog between prospect and agent, such as that provided by Eyecontact™. Such responses are highly desirable because they initiate a substantially synchronous link between the prospect and the agent.

20 There is a wide range of information that can be tracked. Preferred tracking systems track at least one of the following: (a) a length of time that the recipient viewed the message; (b) a length of time that the recipient viewed a portion of the message; (c) an address to which the recipient forwarded the message; and (c) a piece of information relating to a hyperlink contained in the message and utilized by the recipient.

25 Where a third party mailer is used, the third party may tabulate or in some other manner summarize the tracking information, and provide that information back to the initiating marketing agent, or some other agent. Here again this communication most preferably occurs across a public access network such as the Internet, as depicted by arrow 230. One particularly valuable type of information that can be provided to the agent is a
30 sorting of prospects by action. Such sortings allow the agent to allocate his or her time more

efficiently, by prioritizing or taking different steps with respect to prospects as a function of the actions taken by the prospects.

The manager may exert control over marketing activities of the marketing agents in any number of ways. Among the most useful ways of exerting control are modifying the

5 number or kind of prospects or advertising messages to whom a marketing agent has access.

Another valuable control may be the number of sends that a marketing agent is authorized to make, perhaps for a given time period. It is especially contemplated that a given manager will control multiple marketing agents, and in such circumstances it may be useful for the manager to adjust the resources available to the various agents relative to one another,

10 including database and allocated sends. In particular, the manager may exercise at least some control over a relationship between the set of prospect information provided to the marketing agent and the second set of prospect information provided to the second marketing agent.

The manager may alternatively or additionally exercise at least some control over a relationship between the set of advertising messages provided to the marketing agent and the second set of advertising messages provided to the second marketing agent. The manager may alternatively or additionally exercise at least some control over a relationship between the authorized number of sends allocated to the marketing agent and an authorized number of sends allocated to the second marketing agent.

The manager may exert control over marketing activities of the marketing agents according to any number of criteria. One especially contemplated such criterion is the manager considering a percentage of responses received by the marketing agent relative to a number of sends initiated by the marketing agent. Another contemplated criterion may be the number of sales of one marketing agent relative to another. Still other contemplated criteria relate to how many agents are within a given tier in a multi-tier structure, or how many agents

25 or tiers are below a given agent. Thus, a company may contract to provide marketing services as discussed herein, and utilize five first-tier agents in that regard. Each of the first-tier agents may sign up two or three second-tier agents, who may in turn sign up third tier agents. At each level some or all of the agents may be companies or other organizations, individuals, or even machines.

30 In Figure 2 a method of conducting an advertising campaign 200 comprises the steps of: providing a marketing environment having a marketing agent and a manager cooperating

on the advertising campaign 210; providing the marketing agent with a set of prospect information and a set of advertising messages 220; the marketing agent taking an active role in at least one of: (a) selecting a recipient from the set of prospect information; (b) selecting a message from the set of advertising messages; and (c) electronically sending the message to the recipient 230; the recipient electronically responding to the message 240; tracking the recipient electronically responding to the message 250; and the manager exercising at least some control over at least one of: (a) the set of prospect information provided to the marketing agent; (b) the set of advertising messages provided to the marketing agent; and (c) an authorized number of sends allocated to the marketing agent 260.

As should now be apparent, a significant advantage to the above-described methods and systems is that they allow sales and marketing people to rapidly distinguish among suspects, prospects, and qualified prospects. This should be especially beneficial to insurance companies, health care providers, and other entities that market by winnowing down multiple leads to focus on qualified prospects. The addition of management oversight greatly facilitates control of that process.

Thus, specific embodiments and applications of agent managed virtual prospecting have been disclosed. It should be apparent, however, to those skilled in the art that many more modifications besides those already described are possible without departing from the inventive concepts herein. The inventive subject matter, therefore, is not to be restricted except in the spirit of the appended claims. Moreover, in interpreting both the specification and the claims, all terms should be interpreted in the broadest possible manner consistent with the context. In particular, the terms "comprises" and "comprising" should be interpreted as referring to elements, components, or steps in a non-exclusive manner, indicating that the referenced elements, components, or steps may be present, or utilized, or combined with other elements, components, or steps that are not expressly referenced.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of conducting an advertising campaign, comprising:
providing a multi-tiered marketing environment wherein the marketing environment comprises a human marketing agent and a manager cooperating on the advertising campaign;
providing the marketing agent with a set of prospect information and a set of advertising messages;
the marketing agent taking an active role in at least one of: (a) selecting a recipient from the set of prospect information; (b) selecting a message from the set of advertising messages; and (c) electronically sending the message to the recipient;
the recipient electronically responding to the message;
tracking the recipient electronically responding to the message; and
the manager exercising at least some control over at least one of: (a) the set of prospect information provided to the marketing agent; (b) the set of advertising messages provided to the marketing agent; and (c) an authorized number of sends allocated to the marketing agent.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the multi-tiered marketing environment includes at least two tiers.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the multi-tiered marketing environment includes at least two different companies.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the set of prospect information comprises a plurality of data items stored in a prospects database.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the set of advertising messages includes an advertising logo.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the set of advertising messages includes a rich media electronic advertisement.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the set of advertising messages includes an executable rich media electronic advertisement.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of the marketing agent selecting the recipient includes the marketing agent selecting the recipient as part of a group of recipients.
9. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of the marketing agent selecting a message includes the marketing agent selecting a plurality of messages for co-transmission to the recipient.
10. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of the marketing agent taking an active role in sending the message includes the marketing agent initiating the sending of the message using an e-mail interface.
11. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of the recipient electronically responding to the message includes the recipient opening the message using a computer.
12. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of the recipient electronically responding to the message includes the message having multiple pages, and the recipient navigating between at least two of the multiple pages.
13. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of tracking the response includes the recipient displaying the message using a computer, and the computer sending an item of tracking information to a tracking system.
14. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of providing the marketing agent with a piece of information relating to the response includes displaying to the marketing agent at least one of: (a) a length of time that the recipient viewed the message; (b) a length of time that the recipient viewed a portion of the message; (c) an address to which the recipient forwarded the message; and (c) a piece of information relating to a hyperlink contained in the message and utilized by the recipient.
15. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of the manager exercising at least some control includes the manager considering a percentage of responses received by the marketing agent relative to a number of sends initiated by the marketing agent.
16. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

providing a second marketing agent with a second set of prospect information and a second set of advertising messages, the second marketing agent distinct from the first marketing agent;

the second marketing agent taking an active role in at least one of: (a) selecting a second recipient from the second set of prospect information; (b) selecting a second message from the second set of advertising messages; and (c) electronically sending the second message to the second recipient;

the second recipient electronically responding to the second message;

tracking the second recipient electronically responding to the second message.

17. The method of claim 16 further comprising the manager exercising at least some control over a relationship between the set of prospect information provided to the marketing agent and the second set of prospect information provided to the second marketing agent.
18. The method of claim 16 further comprising the manager exercising at least some control over a relationship between the set of advertising messages provided to the marketing agent and the second set of advertising messages provided to the second marketing agent.
19. The method of claim 16 further comprising the manager exercising at least some control over a relationship between the authorized number of sends allocated to the marketing agent and an authorized number of sends allocated to the second marketing agent.

ABSTRACT

A marketing agent and a manager work together on an advertising campaign, the marketing agent selecting prospects and advertising messages, and sending the messages to the prospects, and the manager exercising control over at least one of: (a) the set of prospect information provided to the marketing agent; (b) the set of advertising messages provided to the marketing agent; and (c) an authorized number of sends allocated to the marketing agent. The advertising messages can be virtually anything, from simple logos or banner ads to sophisticated video advertising messages having interactive recipient interfaces, multiple pages of advertising, or cross-branding. Recipient responses to the advertising are tracked, and at least some of the tracking information is provided to the sending agents to assist in both concluding sales and in improving their targeting skills.

09/856287

1/2

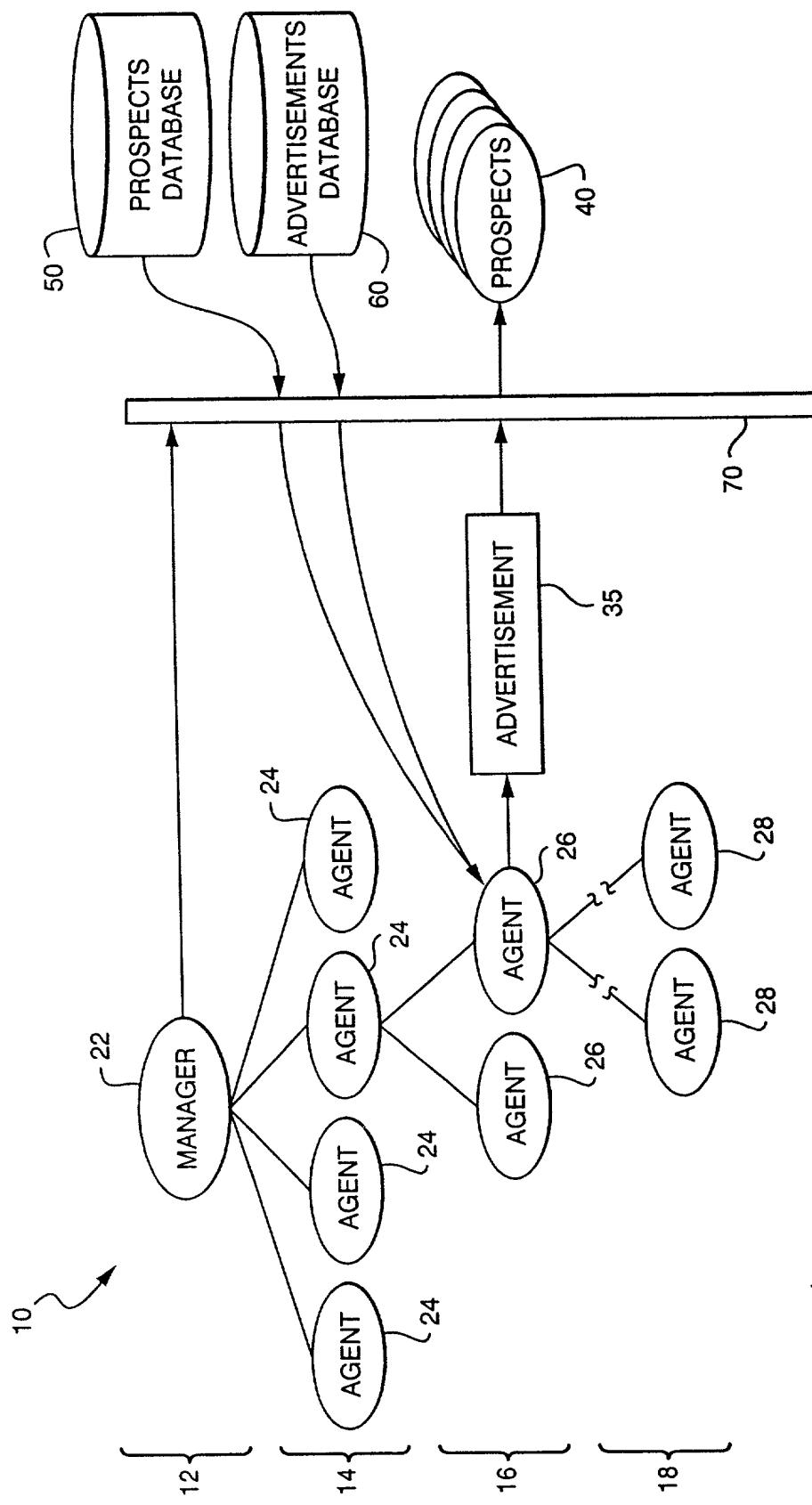


FIG. 1

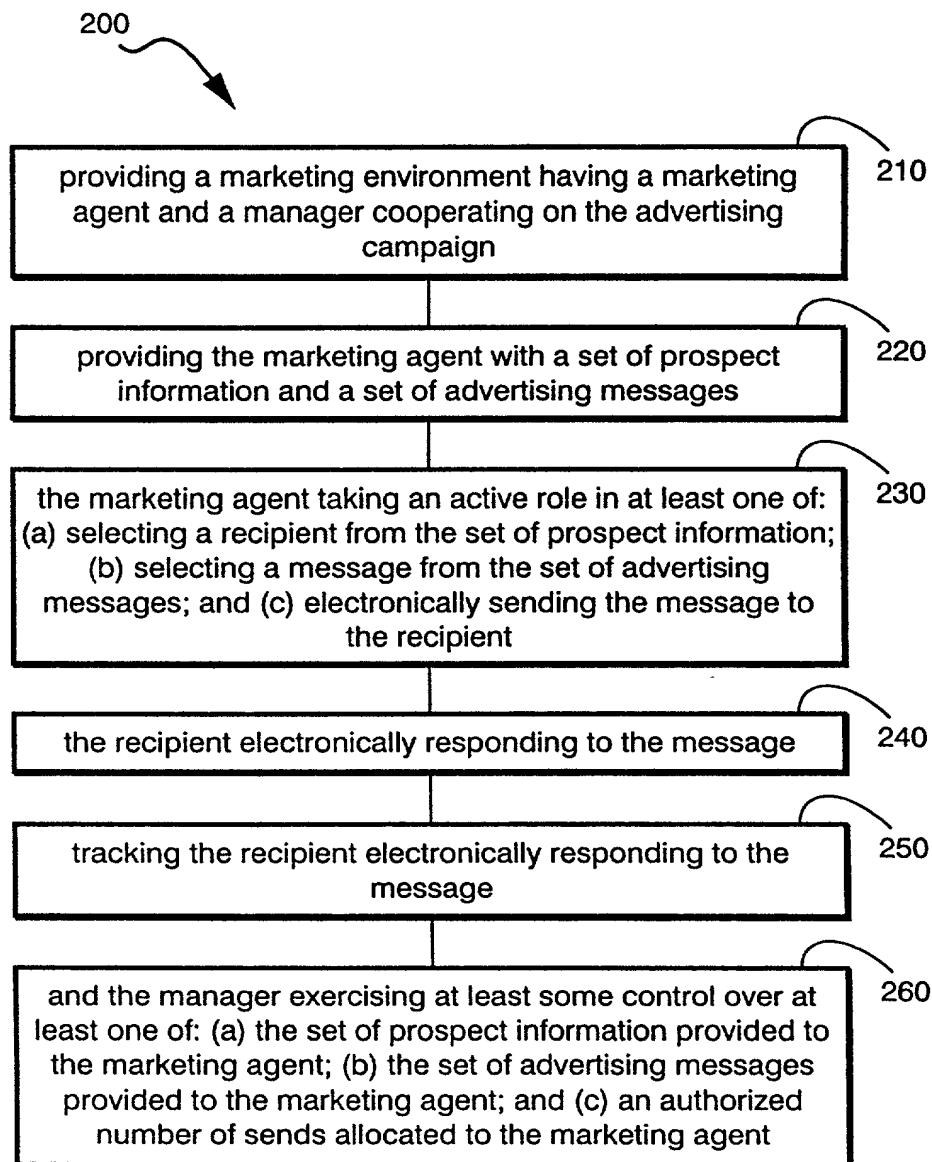


FIG. 2

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

**(ORIGINAL, DESIGN, NATIONAL STAGE OF PCT, SUPPLEMENTAL, DIVISIONAL,
CONTINUATION, OR C-I-P)**

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

TYPE OF DECLARATION

This declaration is for a national stage of PCT application.

INVENTORSHIP IDENTIFICATION

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name. I believe that I am an original, first and joint inventor of the subject matter that is claimed, and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

TITLE OF INVENTION

AGENT MANAGED VIRTUAL PROSPECTING

SPECIFICATION IDENTIFICATION

The specification was described and claimed in PCT International Application No. PCT/US00/07913 filed on March 24, 2000.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REVIEW OF PAPERS AND DUTY OF CANDOR

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information, which is material to patentability as defined in 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56, and which is material to the examination of this application, namely, information where there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable Examiner would consider it important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent.

PRIORITY CLAIM (35 U.S.C. Section 119(a)-(d))

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, Section 119(a)-(d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America listed below and have also

identified below any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed by me on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed.

Such applications have been filed as follows.

**PRIOR PCT APPLICATION(S) FILED WITHIN 12 MONTHS
(6 MONTHS FOR DESIGN) PRIOR TO THIS APPLICATION
AND ANY PRIORITY CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTION 119(a)-(d)**

INDICATE IF PCT	APPLICATION NUMBER	DATE OF FILING DAY, MONTH, YEAR	PRIORITY CLAIMED UNDER 35 U.S.C. SECTION 119
PCT	PCT/US00/07913	24 March 2000	Yes

POWER OF ATTORNEY

I hereby appoint the following practitioner(s) to prosecute this application and transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

APPOINTED PRACTITIONER(S)

Robert D. Fish

REGISTRATION NUMBER(S)

33880

David J. Zoetewey

46258

Sandra P. Thompson

46264

Martin Fessenmaier

46697

I hereby appoint the practitioner(s) associated with the Customer Number provided below to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith.

SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO

Robert D. Fish
1440 N. Harbor Blvd.
Suite 706
Fullerton, CA 92835
USA

Customer Number 24392

DIRECT TELEPHONE CALLS TO:

Robert D. Fish
(714) 449-2337

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

SIGNATURE(S)

R.M.
Richard MCEWAN

Inventor's signature

Date 4/30/01

Country of Citizenship USA

Residence Dana Point, CA

Post Office Address MindArrow Systems, Inc.

101 Enterprise, Suite 340

Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 USA

S.W.
Scott WOLFINGTON

Inventor's signature

Date 4-30-2001

Country of Citizenship USA

Residence *89 Rue Money*

Post Office Address MindArrow Systems, Inc.

101 Enterprise, Suite 340

Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 USA